THE MADRAS LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL.

Tuesday, the 10th January 1950.

The House met in the Council Chamber, Fort St. George, at 2–30 p.m., Mr. President (THE HON. SRI R. B. RAMAKRISHNARAJU) in the Chair.

I.—QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS.

STARRED QUESTIONS.

[95-A *Q.*—

MR. PRESIDENT :—" The hon. Member Mr. Ramaswami Reddiyar is not here. Is he likely to come? "]

SRI N. SANKARA REDDI :—" Yes, Sir, he may be coming."

MR. PRESIDENT :—" Then I will take it up last."

Colonel Karamchandani, District Medical Officer, Bellary.

* 96 *Q.*—SRI B. BHIMA RAO : Will the Hon. the Minister for Public Health be pleased to state—

(*a*) the details of the qualifications of Colonel Karamchandani, I.M.S., present District Medical Officer of Bellary;

(*b*) whether the Government have issued an order in 1935 or thereabout entitling him to charge a fee of Rs. 32 for each consultation;

(*c*) whether such a Government Order has been issued in favour of any other I.M.S. Officer;

(*d*) whether there is any rule or convention that such officers with high qualifications should be posted to the Metropolis or flourishing cities like Mathurai or Tiruchirappalli or Coimbatore; and

(*e*) whether the Government have received any representations from the public of Bellary that he should be transferred to any other place and if so, what action has been taken thereon?

THE HON. DR. T. S. S. RAJAN :—" (*a*) The qualifications of Lieut.-Col. P. V. Karamchandani are M.B.B.S. (Bombay) and F.R.C.P. (Edin.).

" (*b*) *to* (*d*) The answer is in the negative; the question of fees for private practice is a matter for the Medical Officer and his private patients.

" (*e*) Lieutenant-Colonel Karamchandani, District Medical Officer, Bellary, has been transferred as District Medical Officer, North Arcot."

JANAB K. T. M. AHAMED IBRAHIM :—" May I know whether in the past the practice was to post to Headquarters Hospitals senior I.M.S. officers who were generally Europeans so that European Civilian officers in such places might get medical treatment from them, and if so, is there any necessity for that practice to be continued? "

THE HON. DR. T. S. S. RAJAN :—" Whatever be the practice in the past, things have considerably changed and we do not pursue that policy."

SRI P. R. K. SARMA :—" May I know whether there is any complaint about this particular gentleman when he was in charge of the Tiruchirappalli hospital?"

THT HON. DR. T. S. S. RAJAN :—" He was in Tiruchirappalli years ago. I do not know how that question arises."

SRI P. R. K. SARMA :—" May I know whether there were any complaints to the Government against Mr. Karamchandani when he was doctor in charge of the Tiruchirappalli hospital to the effect that he was very cruel towards the workers and that he was very active in suppressing the trade union movement of the hospital workers?"

THE HON. DR. T, S. S. RAJAN :—" That has nothing to do with this question because this question relates to Colonel Karamchandani who is a senior I.M.S. Medical Officer who worked in Bellary. He has since been transferred to North Arcot."

SRI R. SURYANARAYANA RAO :—" May I know whether the Government do not consider it necessary that they should fix the maximum amount a doctor can charge as fees for consultation especially when the doctor happens to be a Government servant?"

THE HON. DR. T. S. S. RAJAN :—" If it is a private case, he has got his own way of dealing with it. We have no rules in regard to that matter."

SRI R. SURYANARAYANA RAO :—" In view of the fact that these doctors are the only competent doctors available in the profession, do not the Government feel that they should see that their officers do not fleece the poor patients who have to go to them for consultation?"

THE HON. DR. T. S. S. RAJAN :—" If the hon. Member has got specific instances, we will certainly go into the matter."

DR. V. K. JOHN :—" Will the Government consider the advisability of making a rule that when a doctor who is a Government employee is consulted by anybody, the patient need pay only according to his ability?"

THE HON. DR. T. S. S. RAJAN :—" There is no such thing; it is his private practice."

DR. V. K. JOHN :—" I am asking whether the Government, in consideration of the fact that the doctor is getting a pay from the Government, will not consider the advisability of making a rule enabling everybody to consult the doctor if he wants to consult him and pay him according to his means."

THE HON. DR. T. S. S. RAJAN :—" Certainly everybody is allowed to consult the doctor at the time and the place specified."

JANAB K. T. M. AHAMED IBRAHIM :—" In view of the fact that these doctors receive high pay from the tax-payers' money, is it not advisable that the fee that they should be allowed to charge for consultation should be specifically prescribed by the Government so that there may be uniformity and the doctors' services may be available to the common man especially because they are being paid by the Government? "

THE HON. DR. T. S. S. RAJAN :—" The doctor's fees are certainly controlled by the Government and there are already rules regarding the amount of fees that the doctor could charge. If people want to consult him on all occasions and at any time they please other than the specified hours, the doctor can try to charge any fees he thinks proper. His salary has nothing to do with private patients because his salary depends upon the grade he possesses as an I.M.S. Officer and it does not include any category of fees that he should receive for his private work."

SRI R. SURYANARAYANA RAO :—" When these doctors are permitted to have private practice, may I know whether the Government should not prescribe the fees they can charge from the public because they are already paid by the tax-payer in the form of their salary? "

MR. PRESIDENT :—" That is the question. Are the Government prepared to give a specific answer whether they are prepared to fix the fee? "

THE HON. DR. T. S. S. RAJAN :—" The Government have fixed the rate. By way of certain specific terms the doctor is allowed to charge his own fees for private cases. The mere fact that he is a Government servant in a specified way does not naturally imply that any of the rate-payers can go and call on him and engage him beyond the specified hours of work."

MR. PRESIDENT :—" The question is about consultation fees. Is there any limit to the fee to be charged? "

THE HON. DR. T. S. S. RAJAN :—" No. Sir."

SRI R. SURYANARAYANA RAO :—" Will the Government consider the desirability of fixing such ceiling limit for the fees to be charged."

THE HON. DR. T. S. S. RAJAN :—The matter will certainly be considered. But as I informed the House, there are certain regulations already for charging fees particularly by these high-paid officers."

DR. V. K. JOHN :—" Are the doctors, who are paid a salary by the Government, in full time service of the Government? "

THE HON. DR. T. S. S. RAJAN :—" Yes, Sir."

Dr. V. K. JOHN :—" Have the Government fixed the time during which their services are at the disposal of the public and at which time they cannot charge a fee? If so, what are the hours? "

The Hon. Dr. T. S. S. RAJAN :—" Hours are all fixed when they have got to be in their office rooms and people are entitled to go and demand the services of the doctor at that place at the specified hours."

Dr. V. K. JOHN :—" Are the Government aware of the public feeling that when Government doctors who are paid salaries by the Government charge fees which are considered extortionate, the Government become unpopular? "

The Hon. Dr. T. S. S. RAJAN :—" I am aware of it, Sir."

Janab ABDUL LATIF FAROOKHI :—" According to the regulations mentioned by the Hon. Minister, what is the maximum amount of fee to be charged by a doctor? "

The Hon. Dr. T. S. S. RAJAN :—" I want notice of the question, Sir."

Provision of roads in villages.

* 97 *Q*.—Sri M. NARAYANA RAO : Will the Hon. the Minister for Public Works be pleased to state—

(*a*) whether many of the villages in the Province become isolated, especially in the rainy season, as they have not even earthen roads to link up to the main roads;

(*b*) whether the Government have under consideration in their road programme to provide every village with a good earthen road to link up to the major road;

(*c*) if so, in what time it is proposed to complete the programme; and

(*d*) whether it is a fact that the Highways Department have not paid any attention to the construction of roads in panchayat and non-panchayat areas?

The Hon. Sri M. BHAKTAVATSALAM :—" The information[a] asked for is placed on the table of the House."

Sri M. NARAYANA RAO :—" May I know whether the Government think that the completion of the programme is possible in view of the financial position of the Government? "

The Hon. Sri M. BHAKTAVATSALAM :—" That is exactly the question which we have to examine and which I cannot answer now."

Sri M. NARAYANA RAO :—" Will the Government give priority at least to this one scheme? "

The Hon. Sri M. BHAKTAVATSALAM :—" There are several schemes which would need much higher priority than this scheme."

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[a] **Printed as Appendix I on pages 1068–1069 infra.**